



PATENT
28489/39573

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT
AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: Brian Dorricott

Serial No.: 10/637,118

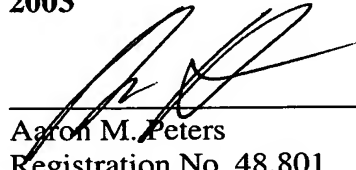
Filed: August 8, 2003

For: "E-Mail Systems"

Group Art Unit: To be assigned

Examiner: To be assigned

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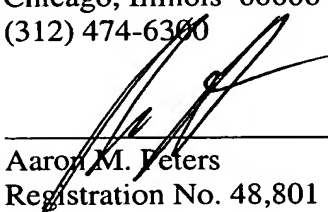
Sir:

Applicant hereby claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 from Great Britain Patent
Application No. 0218431.5, which was filed on August 9, 2002. A certified copy of the
Great Britain application from which priority is claimed is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____



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Registration No. 48,801

September 18, 2003



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

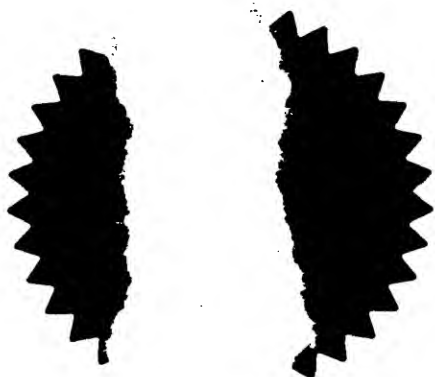
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NP10 8QQ

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Dated

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Request for grant of a patent

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THE PATENT OFFICE

- 5 AUG 2002

RECEIVED BY FAX

1. Your reference P104293GB

2. Patent application number
(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

0218431.5

09 AUG 2002

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of
each applicant (underline all surnames)Gordano Limited
PO Box 79
Clevedon
North Somerset
BS21 7EF
United Kingdom

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

80304 (300)

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the
country/state of its incorporation

UNITED KINGDOM

4. Title of the invention

E-Mail Systems

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom
to which all correspondence should be sent
(including the postcode)WITHERS & ROGERS
Goldings House
2 Hays Lane
London
SE1 2HW

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

1776001 ✓

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more
earlier patent applications, give the country
and the date of filing of the or each of these
earlier applications and (if you know it) the or
each application number

Country

Priority application number
(if you know it)Date of filing
(day / month / year)7. If this application is divided or otherwise
derived from an earlier UK application, give
the number and the filing date of the earlier
application

Number of earlier application

Date of filing
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grant of a patent required in support of this
request? (answer 'Yes' if:a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant,

or

c) any named applicant is a corporate body.
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Continuation sheets of this form

Description 6

Claim(s) 2

Abstract 1

Drawing(s) 1

10. If you are also filing any of the following, state how many against each item.

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (Patents Form 7/77)

Request for preliminary examination and search (Patents Form 9/77) 1

Request for substantive examination (Patents Form 10/77) 1

Any other documents (please specify)

11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature *Withers & Rogers*

Date 06/08/02

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom Jeff K Hogg 0117 925 3030

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Notes

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DUPLICATE

P104293GB

E-Mail Systems

This invention relates to a method and apparatus for transferring users' e-mail accounts from one mail system to another.

The transfer of e-mail accounts to a new system is normally the responsibility of an administrator who has to transfer the associated mail folders and their contents from the old system to the new system before the new system is switched on and users are allowed to use it with reissued passwords. However, there are a number of difficulties that may arise in transferring e-mail accounts from one system to another including the lack of a listing of the accounts on the old system, the need to convert mail folder contents from one proprietor format to another, encrypted passwords and legal issues in decrypting or analysing the file formats of proprietary systems. Therefore, the transfer of e-mail accounts from one system to another can be complicated and involves a risk of a loss of e-mail services during the transfer process.

An object of the invention is to simplify the transfer of e-mail accounts between systems.

According to the present invention, users' e-mail accounts are transferred from a source server to a destination server by setting up the destination server so that it acts as a gateway transferring e-mail connections to the source server and then transferring users' mail folders from the source server to the destination server.

The destination server can be set up as a gateway using a router to route TCP connections to the user's e-mail account via the destination server. Preferably, however, the destination server is set up by allocating it the same IP address as the source server and the source server is allocated a new IP address so that e-mail connections are routed through the destination server. In either arrangement, log in of each user to the destination server for the first time initiates the transfer of their mail folder and its contents from the source server to the destination server, either immediately or after the user has logged off. Thereafter, when that user logs in, the destination server handles that user's access locally. When the transfer of mail folders take place immediately, the user may experience a slight

server 2. In setting up for porting, the Destination server 2 is configured to serve as a gateway to transfer all POP3, SMTP and IMAP4 connections through to the Source server (which will later be moved to a new IP address).

Phase ii) – Account Transfer

To begin the porting process, the Source server 1 is taken off-line and given the new IP address. The Destination server 2 is connected to the network (preferably on the same LAN segment), and the Source server 1 restarted. Users can continue to collect and send e-mail in the usual way as illustrated in Figure 2.

When a user logs in to the Destination server 2 for the first time, it collects the account information (e.g. user name and password). There are then two different strategies for transferring the user's mail folder and its contents from the source system 1 to the Destination server 2. In the first strategy, the Destination server 2 acts as a gateway for the Source server 1. When the user logs off, the Destination server 2 logs on to the Source server 1 (by IMAP4 or POP3) and transfers all the user's folder contents to the Destination server and then marks the account as transferred.

In the second strategy, as soon as the Destination Server 2 has the account information, it logs on to the Source Server 1 and initiates the transfer of mail folder and its contents. During this transfer, the user will perceive a slight delay, although this is unlikely to be large due to the proximity of the two servers.

Subsequent log-on's by the user are handled by the Destination server 2 directly.

Over a period of time (the duration of which is defined by the system administrator responsible for the portation process), all live accounts will have been transferred automatically to the Destination server 2 without any interruption of service to users. After this specified period, the administrator can retire the Source server 1 secure in the knowledge that all live accounts are on the Destination server 2.

To show how this works the Internet Messaging Protocols are examined in more detail.

The transfer process could take place at two different times (depending upon the chosen strategy) but the process is the same in both cases.

The Destination Server 2 creates a local account for the user and marks it as "not in service". If the account owner attempts to log into the account they will be told the server is currently busy and that they should try later. Likewise, any e-mail for that account will be held off by responding with a "retry later" command.

The Destination Server 2 logs into the IMAP4 service of Source Server 1 with the user name and password of the account to be transferred. Using the IMAP4 protocol, the Destination Server 2 enumerates all the folders on the Source Server 1 and copies each folder and its contents (including any additional message information, e.g. draft messages, etc.).

If the Source Server 1 does not support the IMAP4 protocol, the Destination Server 2 may connect to the Source Server using POP3 and transfer the InBox.

When all the folders have been transferred, the Destination Server 2 logs off from the Source Server 1 and marks the local account as "in service". Any future attempts by the account owner to read e-mail will now be serviced by the Destination Server 2. E-mail for the account can now be delivered.

The transfer process is largely transparent to the user firstly because the transfer time is likely to be small since the folders are transferred between two machines on a high bandwidth link, and secondly because the transfer may take place after a user has just finished checking their e-mail. This means that there is usually a period of time for the account to be transferred when the user is no longer accessing their e-mail.

Phase iii): Retiring Source Server

After a period of time (e.g. a month), the system administrator may determine that it is time to retire the Source Server 1. Some special mail routing rules (e.g. forwards, auto-responders, etc.) and accounts that have not been accessed will not be transferred

Claims

1. A method of transferring users' e-mail accounts from a source server to a destination server comprising setting up the destination server so that it acts as a gateway transferring e-mail connections to the source server, and then transferring users' mail folders from the source server to the destination server.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the destination server is set up so that when each user logs on for the first time, it initiates the transfer of the user's mail folder and its contents from the source server to the destination server.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2 in which, when each user logs on for the first time, the destination server initiates the transfer of the user's mail folder before it services the user.
4. A method as claimed in claim 2 in which, when each user logs on for the first time, the destination server passes the e-mail connection through to the source server, and, once the user has logged off, transfers the user's mail folder.
5. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the destination server is set up by allocating it the same IP address as the source server, the source server then being allocated a new IP address.
6. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 in which a router serves to route mail connections to users' e-mail accounts via the destination server.
7. A method as claimed in claim 5 or 6 in which the source server is retired once all e-mail accounts have been transferred.
8. Apparatus for transferring users' e-mail accounts from a source server to a destination server comprising a source server on which is set up the e-mail accounts, and a destination server which is set up to receive e-mail accounts as they are transferred from the source server, the destination server being set up as a gateway transferring e-mail

ABSTRACT**E-Mail Systems**

"Users' e-mail accounts are transferred from a source server 1 to a destination server 2 by setting up the destination server so that it acts as a gateway transferring e-mail connections to the source server and then transferring users' mail folders from the source server to the destination server. The destination server 2 can be set up as a gateway using a router to route TCP connections to the user's e-mail account via the destination server. Preferably, the destination server 2 is set up by allocating it the same IP address as the source server 1 and the source server is allocated a new IP address so that e-mail connections are routed to the destination server. Log in of each user to the destination server 2 for the first time initiates the transfer of their mail folder and its contents from the source server to the destination server, either immediately or after the user has logged off. Thereafter, when that user logs in, the destination server 2 handles that user's access locally."

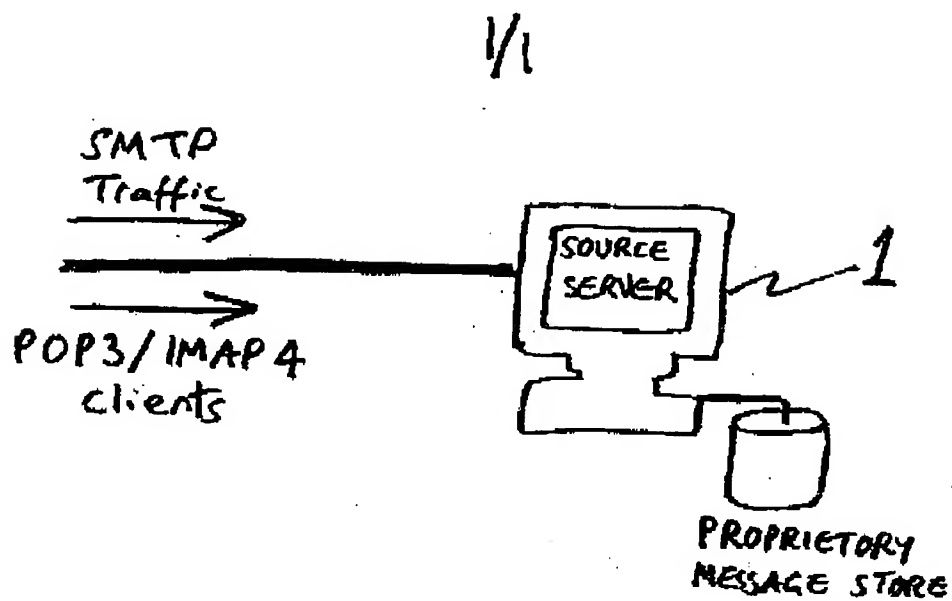


Figure 1

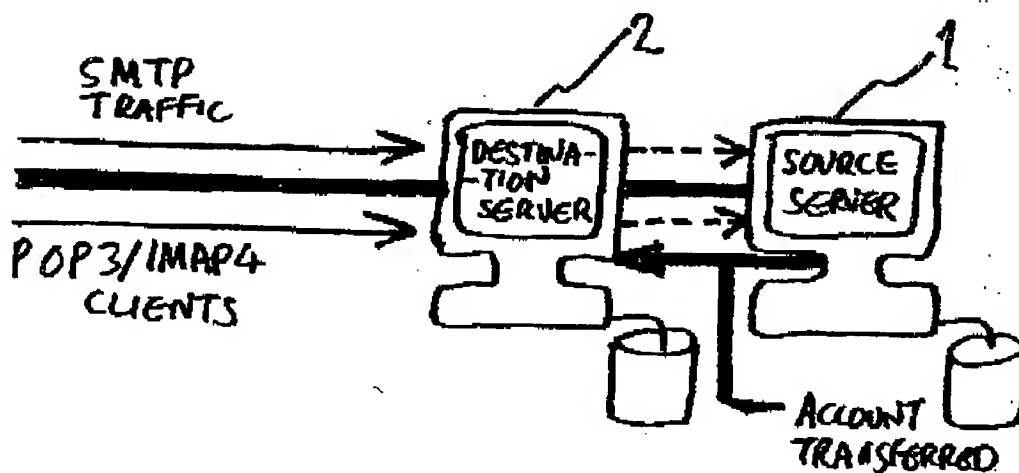


Figure 2